

## **VI. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

### **NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The Division of Parks and Recreation's approach to natural resource management is directed by the North Carolina Constitution and the State Parks Act, both of which require the prudent management of natural resources. The constitution sets the overall policy by broadly defining the conservation and protection of natural resources and the acquisition of such resources as a proper function of government. The State Parks Act states that unique archaeological, geological, biological, scenic and recreational resources are a part of the heritage of the people that *"...should be preserved and managed by those people for their use and for the use of their visitors and descendants."*

The North Carolina state parks system plays an important role in maintaining, rehabilitating and perpetuating the state's natural heritage. The natural resources of the state parks system are: high quality, rare or representative examples of natural communities; native plants and animals; geological features and landforms; water resources; and the natural processes that affect these resources. The primary objective in natural resource management will be the protection of natural resources for their inherent integrity and for appropriate types of enjoyment while ensuring their availability for future generations.

It is the Division's policy that natural resources will be managed by allowing natural environments to evolve through natural processes with minimal human influence. Natural resource management will not attempt solely to preserve individual species or processes; rather, it will attempt to maintain all the components and processes of a park's naturally evolving ecosystems. When intervention is necessary, direct or secondary effects on park resources will be minimized to the greatest extent possible. Intervention of natural processes may occur:

1. To correct or compensate for the previous human disruption of natural processes;
2. To protect, restore or enhance rare species and natural communities;
3. To protect, restore or enhance significant archaeological resources;
4. To construct, maintain, improve or protect park facilities; and,
5. To prevent danger to human health or safety around park facilities.

All park facilities will be designed, constructed and maintained to avoid adverse impacts to high quality natural communities, rare plant and animal species, major archaeological sites and other significant natural and cultural resources.

## NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Division of Parks and Recreation staff identifies natural and cultural resource management issues as a component of the general management plan process and groups them according to the categories shown below. Staff assigns a high, medium or low priority to each issue using the criteria described at the end of this section. The Division's Natural Resources Program is responsible for all actions unless otherwise noted.

Category	Subcategory	Project Description	Priority*
Animal Management	Inventory Deficiencies	Herp inventory (mainly reptiles) needs to be completed.	Medium
		Conduct inventory of waterdog population along the Neuse and other tributaries.	Medium
	Rare Species Management	Red-cockaded Woodpecker population needs to be inventoried and monitored.	Medium
Botanical Resource Management	Exotic Species Management	Based on the 2000 exotic species inventory, the park has very few exotic species. Recommend treating areas identified in the exotic species inventory to ensure species do not spread.	Medium
	Inventory Deficiencies	Natural community mapping is needed for the entire park.	Medium
		An updated species inventory is needed for the entire park.	Medium
	Rare Species Management	Monitor populations of new species identified in the rare species inventory.	Low
Infrastructure Management	Environmental Compliance for Planned Construction Projects	Review proposed location for the visitor center.	Medium
	Septic/Wastewater Management	Remove pit toilets from group camp area.	Medium
	Road Management	Widen existing roads or add sidewalks to allow visitors to walk along road shoulders.	Medium
Land Use Management	Buffer Zone to State Park Property	Continue to monitor for hunting encroachment near park boundaries.	Medium
	Fire Management	Implement current burn plan using CLNE staff or other East District Staff.	High
	Park Boundaries	Complete survey and boundary marking on all existing properties.	Medium
	Rights of Way	Resolve right-of-way issues related to group camp access.	High
	Trash and Debris Disposal	Clean out old park trash site behind maintenance area.	Medium

	Viewshed Management	Develop a viewshed management plan for the overlook area.	High
Visitor and Recreational Resource Management	Soil compaction	Monitor compaction and erosion in picnic area and family campground.	Medium
Water Resource Management	Riparian Buffer Zone Protection	Ensure enforcement and maintenance of all stream buffers associated with timber harvesting outside of the park.	Medium
	River bank erosion	Develop a management plan for the two cliff sections along the Neuse River.	High
	Water Pollution	Monitor roads and trails to ensure stream bank integrity is maintained.	Medium
		Continue to monitor and control algal levels in the swim lake.	Medium

\*Explanation of priority codes

- HIGH** If the resource management activity is not undertaken in the near future there is a distinct possibility that natural resources will be compromised. These issues should be addressed in the next five years.
- MEDIUM** Although there is a possibility that resources could be compromised, the priority is not as critical as the high priority projects.
- LOW** Projects with low priority have significantly less chance for compromise of the natural resources if the project is not undertaken in a timely fashion or the project may depend on completion of other projects.

06/15/04